

Minutes 11/18/20

Attendees:

Erin Sacluti	Stacey Masliansky	Darlena Simmons
Allison Bull	Ashanti Madlock-Henderson	Sarah Trulley
Marissa Woodward	Garrett Woodward	Katie Shonk
Carla Green	Katherine Walts	Tara Williams
Amber Bond	Raechel Alexander	Courtney Shapiro
Marlena Jayatilake	Erin Rams	Katie Weiss
Nicki DeVine	Daniel Achina	Natasha Dobson
Carrie Shonk	Diana Sheehan	Will Hobart
Liz Ribeiro	Michelle Redmond-Henley	Shana Sternstein
Joey Hailpern	Mya Wilkins	Michaela Marchi
Nicole O'Connell	James Gray	Roger Williams
Tina Vinson	Sarita Smith	Dee Johnson
Natalie Gillespie	Anita Geevarghese	Patty Harris
Allen Alexander	Paul Ribeiro	Yvette Henry
Patrick Rams	Melissa Sacluti	Aaron Masliansky
Alecia Wartowski	Kelli Kaul	Aaron Trulley
Isabel Machado	Roxane Heinze-Bradshaw	Urvi Tulsiani

Principal Announcements:

- Dr. Horton's email shows next potential return to school at 1/19/21. Today's positivity rate was 16% in our region, which does not look promising. As soon as Mr. Gray knows anything, he will share that information, but his guess is it will be pushed back.
- Coffee with the Principal 11/23. Get questions to Allison Bull before then.
- Next Coffee with the Principal is 12/4 with Cynthia Gonzalez and Diana Cross, who will explain MAP test, results; follow up to last year's presentation.
- Emily Whittenberg is a third grader teacher on maternity leave. She will stay home with her children all year and Connall Walsh is no longer the permanent substitute, but the full-time teacher.

Executive Committee Announcements:

- Still accepting PTA memberships (<https://walker.new.memberhub.store/store>).
- No cost membership available on website.
- Encouraging membership so that you can vote on further PTA decisions.
- Spirit wear store is up and running thanks to Courtney Shapiro and her team. We have several orders, but would love a few more. We have masks and clothing. Order closes 11/30. Courtney and Allison will work together to distribute orders. Here is the link to order: <https://bluesky.commonsku.com/shop/5212ab23-b9e8-4765-963d-017d75bfea5d/shop>
- Amazon Smile-Please sign up through the website (smile.amazon.com) or phone app to support Walker. 0.5% of eligible purchases return to the school. We will post the steps on FB and on a flyer for Mr. Gray to send out again.
- Boxes of Stories-8819 Ewing Ave, 8947 Lincolnwood Dr, and 9940 Lincolnwood Dr are the Walker addresses so far. Works like Little Free Libraries to take a book and leave a book to take the place of free school bookstores. Once we can get back into the building, we can grab more

books to keep the boxes full. See this link for a map of all of the boxes of stories:
<https://tinyurl.com/D65BoxCajitas>

- Ashanti finished the PTA directory, which looks awesome. Please email her with any changes.
- Treasurer Update-Membership dues have increased, so thank you (\$1,310). Box tops (\$54 year to date), spirit wear (\$30). As we transition roles from Terry Velan to Ashanti Madlock-Henderson, we need someone to volunteer to audit the books.

Equity Committee:

- Anita will send Mr. Gray a FAN flyer with all the speaker info. Two photographers have been photographing black children to share their message. Different type of event than other FAN offerings.

Black Students Achieve:

- Tina Vinson, one of the founders for this group for parents and caregivers of black children, shared the main mission is to close the achievement gap that is present at Walker and across the district and schools in the US.
- Recently had meetings with Mr. Gray about Walker's outcomes on MAP tests compared to rest of district to help our students be successful.

Fundraising Committee:

- We do not have a total from the Wendy's fundraiser yet. Sorry about the drive through hiccup and the need to go inside. Their technology did not support keying in the fundraiser at the drive thru.
- We are partnering with Benefit Mobile for a holiday blitz fundraiser. It's really safe and easy to sign up and use. Benefit partners with dozens of retailers (Amazon, Target, restaurants) who will return a percentage (3-20%) of purchases back to the school. App based through App Store or Google Play. Please sign up at this link: <https://www.benefit-mobile.com/causes/walker-elementary-school> for day to day and holiday shopping.

Virtual Book Fair and Coin Drive:

- Natasha Dobson thanked the book fair committee: Sarah Trulley, Carla Green, Elizabeth Pawlak, Kathy Ryan, and Kelly Kaul.
- \$1,700 in total sales, \$255 coming back to Walker. Student coin drive raised \$780. Teacher coin drive raised \$600 and \$270 in Booked gift cards purchased for teachers. Booked has offered to sell books to teachers at cost.
- Booked was great to work with, maybe we will try another book fair with them in spring.
- Working on date for book deliveries. Some of the books have not come in yet.
- Only one FRL voucher was redeemed.

Community Engagement Committee:

- Student to student, parent to parent, family to family, and Walker Proud are four main areas of focus.
- We have lots of ideas, but they all take a lot of work to run virtually.
- For students, we are trying to keep it open and not so structured (playing online games together).
- For parents, we are trying to match veteran families who also have K students with K and other new families who may not have been inside the school building yet.

- For families, looking to coordinate a big community art project likes Dawes School's large mural.
- We will start advertising in Mr. Gray's newsletter soon.

One Fund/PEP:

- PTA Equity Project has reps from every school in the district and Walker has voted to stay involved over the years. Started a couple years ago by pooling resources and distributing funds to schools that had PTA budgets of \$75/student or less. Walker was a recipient the first year and received \$3,500. The goal is making sure every school in the district is working with a level budget.
- \$50/student is the equality portion for elementary schools, remainder (about \$270K based on 2018-19 figures) is the equity portion. Based on these figures with a 35% free and reduced lunch population, Walker would receive \$87.96/student, which is lower than Walker raised that year of \$101.61/student.
- Each elementary school will have a reserve fund of \$5K to cover administration costs over the summer before the PEP distribution is received.
- PEP is now an official subcommittee of PTA council. Elizabeth Davies has been elected the chairperson of PEP.
- Carrie Shonk, Anita Geeverghese, and Mya Wilkins are Walker's current PEP reps. Ashanti Madlock-Henderson, our treasurer-elect, will also become an official PEP rep.
- Opened the floor for comments with everyone given 2-3 minutes to speak with Allison moderating.
- Arguments against PEP like controlling your school's own money, etc. created the economic inequities that currently exist in the district.
- Concerned that the two PEP leaders are members of school boards, there is not diverse representation on the board and committee, why is it a rush to do this when we can't gather for in person town halls, and we are making a three-year commitment.
- PEP subcommittee would be comprised of treasurers from schools participating to oversee the fundraising efforts and money distributions.
- Grateful to have Ashanti Madlock-Henderson's strong voice advocating for Walker.
- Feel better that in the past couple months PEP has taken our concerns seriously and made some important moves (joining as subcommittee of PTA Council).
- A reminder that those of us voting against One Fund know and get that there are inequities and we want to solve that, but we don't like the plan. Insulting to insinuate that we don't want equity across the board.
- Another concern for the PEP leadership (conflict of interest with other boards), lack of diverse representation on board and committee, inability to get info out to everyone during covid, grateful to have Ashanti understanding and expressing these concerns, would like more schools to have similar strong advocates.
- We need to be part of the movement to shape it, and they need to know who is participating before going ahead with planning. Nothing will be distributed until June, we can see the plans and decide not to participate if we don't agree with what is being implemented.
- We are deciding tonight whether to participate or not, and we are voting in good faith to be fully in, not to decide at a later date that we want to pull out after committing.
- Not having a clear plan is concerning as a middle tier school because we don't have a ton of money to play around with.
- Everything is not worked out yet, but I'd like to have a seat at the table.

- Those who have been involved since the beginning recognize that there are a lot of white women on the committee and not as many diverse voices represented as most people would like.
- Mr. Gray started last year two days before teachers reported, and it's been a whirlwind 16 months. He is still getting the lay and context of Evanston/Skokie and it's different than he expected. It is thrilling to hear candid conversation and discussion among parents. However we vote, it won't be unanimous, and we need to respect everyone's opinion. I am not voting personally, but I don't know another district in the country doing this, and it's really exciting. I have heard the discussion for a long time and whatever happens, thank you for being here tonight. 60 parents here on a Wednesday night is amazing.
- Would they consider a letter of intent without full agreement until more of the details are worked out?
- Is there a way to do this where everyone puts funds in for schools that need more assistance instead of them combining and then distributing the large pot of money? We don't know who will be handling it in the future and that's a lot of money they are controlling.
- They do not want to position One Fund as a charity model (inequitable, viewing some schools as more or less resourced).
- The Executive Board knows they will not let us provide a Letter of Intent if that option is not afforded to all schools in lieu of voting to be at the table.
- As decisions are being made, who from Walker is voting on those choices (Executive Board, PEP reps, entire PTA)? If PEP wants everyone's buy in, why were entire PTA's not given the chance to vote on the distribution options, reserve fund options, etc.?
- Each school was allowed to rank the options and were given one vote. Option 2 was chosen for the distribution formula and Option 3 was chosen for the reserve fund amounts.
- If we vote yes to have a seat at the table and work hard to get all of our concerns worked out and are not satisfied, Executive Board would likely return to PTA community for a vote on whether to leave One Fund.
- A lot of the votes were on tight turnarounds and would have required two or three special PTA meetings to get community wide votes, which wasn't feasible.
- PEP set it up so that Executive Boards were making most of the decisions about voting on the options. Walker struggled to get information from PEP and requested our own town hall to try to answer more questions and include the whole PTA community.
- As an Executive Board, we were torn and understand the concerns and challenges. In the end, we agreed unanimously that we want to support and vote yes on One Fund. We have heard from the Walker community that equity is important. There are imperfect plans and unanswered questions, but this is happening whether we like it and join in or not. So now our choice is do we want a seat at the table to help shape it into something we can support? Ashanti Madlock-Henderson knows our concerns and all of the holes in the decision making and will do a great job strongly advocating for Walker's position.
- Carrie Shonk motioned that we vote in favor of joining One Fund and Natalie Gillespie and Marissa Woodward seconded the motion concurrently.
- The poll was listed on zoom with anonymous voting. We voted in favor with 42 people (75%), 14 people voted no (25%).

Volunteer Needs

- Looking for people to join the equity team. Sarita Smith agreed.
- Ashanti is looking for someone to help audit the books during the treasurer transition.

Important Dates:

- 11/23: Chat with the Principal 7 PM
- 12/3: Chat with the Principal 7 PM (topic MAP Testing)
- 11/25-27: No School (Thanksgiving break)
- 12/16: PTA Meeting 7 PM

Adjournment